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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Note verbale dated 23 June 1999 from the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to draw attention to the necessity of relocating South Africa from group (b) to group (c) in the scheme for the apportionment of the costs of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, in accordance with a recent decision of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In this regard, South Africa requests that the matter be included for consideration under the agenda item on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations at the earliest possible occasion, but no later than during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

South Africa has been placed in group (b) of the scheme for the apportionment of the costs of United Nations peacekeeping operations since the introduction of the scheme with the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973. This is an historical anomaly attributable to the misguided policy of the apartheid Government to project South Africa, at the time, as an economically developed Member State.

The fact is that South Africa is a developing country. It has an average per capita gross national product (GNP) of $3,400 per annum (source: World Bank African Development Index 1998/1999), making it the only economically less developed Member State to find itself in category (b) of the scheme for the apportionment of the costs of United Nations peacekeeping operations. It should be noted that South Africa's per capita GNP is lower than those of a number of countries placed in category (c).

Since it assumed office after the country's first ever democratic elections in 1994, the South African Government has consistently sought to meet its financial obligations to the United Nations on time and in full. However, as an economically less developed Member State facing the additional dilemma of redressing the poverty and suffering brought about after many years of apartheid rule, the country can ill afford the added burden it has to carry as a result of its allocation into group (b) of the scheme for the apportionment of costs for peacekeeping operations.

It is further pertinent to note that, at the Twelfth Summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which took place in Durban, South Africa, from 29 August to 3 September 1998, the Heads of State or Government specifically underlined that Members of the Movement and other developing countries shall be classified in a category that is no higher than group (c) in the scale of assessments for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The Government of South Africa believes that, considering the above facts, its request will be regarded positively.

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The Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations would be grateful if the text of the present note could be circulated as a document of the resumed fifty-third session of the General Assembly.